

10-16-1942

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With the Colors

10/16/42

First Lieutenant Arnold Colpitts, engineer for the Norris Electric Co-operative of Newton until he went into the Army, writes Merle D. Yost of Newton from Alaska, where he is with the signal section of the Army Air Forces, as follows:

"I don't have to tell you that I am limited to what I can write from this end. I can tell you, though, without fear of violating any censorship rules, that the life we lead here is very rugged and that we are in a very rugged country. The distances are vast, in some respects desolate, but at the same time interesting and beautiful. We spend most of our time in the open, sleep, eat, work, with nothing but tents for protection against the elements. A few of the more fortunate enjoy the doubtful comforts of 'huts.'

"So far we have not been stabilized long enough to rate any shelter as permanent as a 'hut.' I am beginning to believe that by the time I am situated in a position stable enough to rate a hut, I won't be able to stand the confinement of four walls and a roof. I may be effected by claustrophobia, will use the hut to store belongings in, like the Indians in Northern Wisconsin, and live in a tent pitched alongside the hut.

"Sometimes I wonder how I will act when I eventually return to the States. I may be so used to living in a tent in the open that it will be necessary for me to pitch a tent in the front yard, or on some high bald knob where the wind can get a good clean sweep, and set up a canvas cot to sleep on before I can enjoy a good night's rest. And maybe I won't be able to eat or work inside of a house.

"I have not seen a woman since the first of June. Then again I may be so glad to be back in a house with doors, windows, rugs, flush toilets, mirrors, stairways, chairs, tables, beds, etc., I may never leave, but spend all my time in a soft upholstered chair or bed. I have an idea, though, that I will be sane enough to adopt a medium course and the ways of civilized man."

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Corporal Forrest W. Alexander writes from Stinson field, San Antonio, Texas, as follows:

"I'm certainly proud to be one of the boys here at Stinson field. The climate is what I'd half to call "swell," except a little dust once in a while. I enlisted in the Army February 18 at Peoria, and was sent to Scott field reception center, where I stayed three days, receiving a full uniform. From there on February 22, I was sent to Camp Joseph T. Robinson, and spent two months and one week in the Infantry.

On April 27, I arrived in Duncan field, Texas, and was transferred to the Air Corps. From Duncan field I was sent to Stinson field and was attached to 28th headquarters squadron where I am at the present. I certainly was proud to be one out of three men in our company at Camp Robinson to be qualified for the Air Corps.

"Since being at Stinson field I've been promoted to corporal and have been acting sergeant for about five months. At the present time I'm acting duty sergeant for the headquarters squadron. I like Army life fine. In all the Army is just like civilian life, just what you make out of it."

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"Water is scarce here and has to be hauled. Each tent of four men gets five gallons a day, besides the drink with meals. Our steel helmets make good wash pans. I just shaved out of mine awhile ago. Our bunch is getting the same complaint the other bunch had. Eight were sent back to Camp Young at noon and of the forty-two left only seventeen were able to eat at supper.

"I helped carry one to the ambulance just before mess. He really was sick. It seems to get the fat ones worse. This fellow weighed about 200 pounds. They say all of them have it when they first come here. It is not fatal but bad enough. I may have it yet but I hope not.

"There are plenty of men and machinery here now. Estimates run as high as 40,000 but I believe that is rather high. I ran across a bunch of fellows that were on maneuvers and their tank broke down. No one picked them up for eleven days and then the tank retriever crew brought their tank into camp for repairs. Parts were not available so they are still living in the tank and have been for nineteen days; that makes thirty all together. They are eating with us now and sleep on the ground alongside the tank.

"We killed a scorpion in the mess hall today and a rattlesnake with two rattles at the edge of camp. It may sound bad but I sort of enjoy it at that, at least it doesn't lack variety."

Sylvan Robards, who has been at the Cooks' and Bakers' school at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for several months, is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ohmer Robards of Newton. He has a ten days' furlough.

Private Sylvan M. Kocher, instructor at Chanute field, has been transferred to Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he will continue as an instructor in propellers in the United States Army Air Forces.

Neil Fisher, a son of Joseph T. Fisher and a nephew of Mrs. W. E. Franke and Miss Fannie Fisher of Newton, will receive a commission as a second lieutenant today at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, where he is graduating in radio at the Signal Corps school.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Simpson of Newton vicinity are in receipt of a letter from their son, Wayne Simpson, stating that he had arrived at Fort Warren, Wyoming. He was recently inducted into the United States Army at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

Private Theodore A. Kocher, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Kocher of near Newton, who enlisted in the United States Army Air Force last April as a mechanic, has graduated at Chanute field Technical school, Rantoul. He is now taking an advanced course as a power plant specialist.

Ensign Glenn Bayles, United States Naval Air Force, who has been an instructor at the Naval Air Station at Corpus Christi, Texas, was a guest of his mother, Mrs. R. E. Bayles and family of Newton, this week. He has been transferred to Kansas City, Missouri, as an instructor in a flying school there.

Mrs. Emma Carlton has received a letter from her son, Private Edmond "Speck" Orr stating that he is stationed on an island in the Southwest Pacific. "Speck" says he is fine, but would like to hear from his friends. His address is Private Edmond B. Orr, 36396233, 71st Station Hospital, A. P. O. 37, care Postmaster, San Francisco, California.

John T. Hamilton of Willow Hill has received word from his son, James R. Hamilton, who is with a Task force in an overseas base of the United States Army, that he has been promoted from lieutenant colonel to colonel. Mr. Hamilton has another son, Colonel Raymond S. Hamilton, in the United States Army at Fort Benning, Georgia, an instructor in the Infantry school.